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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
24 October 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

MIDDLE EAST

Situation Report Number 77
(As of 2230 EDT)

THE MILITARY SITUATION

GENERAL

(All times cited in military paragraphs are Cairo/Tel Aviv time, unless otherwise specified.)

1. Fighting apparently has died down again this evening on the Egyptian Front, but the fate of the trapped Egyptian 3rd Army is still uncertain. The army attempted to break out again today, according to the Israelis, but with no success; the Israelis continue to ask for the unit's surrender.

2. On the Syrian Front, little military activity was reported during the day.

The Israelis have been shelling redayeen positions in Lebanon, however, and have warned that Beirut will have to bear the consequences of any further terrorist activity.

EGYPTIAN FRONT

3. Fighting has apparently died down in the southern sector of the Suez front, although Cairo

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[REDACTED]
claims that some fighting continues. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Else-
where along the front, the cease-fire seems to be in effect.

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4. The final results of today's offensive by the Egyptian 3rd Army toward the Gidi and Mitla passes are not known. There is no clear indication as to what positions the forces involved in this thrust now hold.

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[REDACTED] Israeli forces surrounding Suez City managed to thwart a breakout attempt by Egyptian forces.

5. The concerted Israeli effort to capture Suez and cut off the Egyptian 3rd Army in the two days since the original cease-fire deadline, casts considerable doubt on Tel Aviv's claims that Egypt bears full responsibility for the cease-fire violations. Further evidence of an Israeli hand in the violations are the heavy air and armor strikes against Egyptian positions along the southern canal sector, initiated early on the mornings of 23 and 24 October. Israel apparently has had much to gain by the continued fighting and little to lose.

THE SYRIAN FRONT

6. Calm generally prevailed along the Syrian front during the daylight hours of 24 October, after

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[REDACTED]

its defensive position about 1800 hours. A UN observation post, however, reported that artillery fire starting at 1645 and ending at 1715 was initiated by the Israelis.

[REDACTED]

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STATUS OF UN OBSERVATION TEAMS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], all seven UN observation teams presently planned for the Egyptian side of the cease-fire line have been dispatched and are reporting. The situation is confused, however, because most teams are not certain where the opposing front lines are, and three teams on the southern sector have been held up by an armored battle northwest of Suez.

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9. On the Syrian front, Damascus has pushed hard to have observation teams installed along the Israeli bulge into Syrian territory, and the initial UN plan is to have three posts on each side of the salient. The new posts will be manned from those previously closed and will not require additional personnel.

IRAQ

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Iraq has a total of six army divisions, including two infantry, two armor, and two mountain divisions. Prior to the war, they were

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[REDACTED]

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stationed primarily along the Iranian border and in the Kurdistan region. Baghdad restored diplomatic relations with Iran just after the war began and the Kurds reportedly have pledged to avoid hostilities with the Iraqis in the interests of Muslim solidarity. Damascus reportedly has been getting increasingly edgy about the strengthened Iraqi military presence in Syria; there have been suggestions that three or four divisions may ultimately be deployed there.

SOVIET POLITICAL ACTIVITY

11. The only Soviet reference so far to Egyptian President Sadat's call for US and Soviet troops to implement the cease-fire came from Ambassador Malik in tonight's UN Security Council debate. According to preliminary press reports, Malik called this request "entirely justified." The emphasis of Malik's presentation, however, appeared to be on the need for the US to take steps to halt Israeli military activities. Malik said Washington had an obligation to guarantee Israeli observance of the cease-fire and added that "no reasonable man will believe the impotent of the US in this matter."

12. Malik went on to propose that the Security Council adopt sanctions against Israel, but did not introduce a resolution to this effect. He also called on all nations to sever diplomatic and other ties with Tel Aviv.

13. Moscow's chagrin at the Israeli advance despite the UN cease-fire call it had co-sponsored was indicated earlier today by a message from Foreign Minister Gromyko to Secretary-General Waldheim, stressing the need for UN observers, and saying that the inaction of the secretariat in this regard was "surprising."

CHINA

14. In a conversation with the US ambassador yesterday the Chinese ambassador to France expressed

strong misgivings about Soviet motives in the Middle East. The Soviets, he claimed, were up to no good, seeking to follow in the footsteps of the unsuccessful Tsarist policy of military expansionism in the area. He went on to say that it was important that the parties involved in the Middle East conflict solve the problem through negotiations without outside interference--something which would be very difficult to achieve while both Washington and Moscow are supplying arms.

ISRAEL

15. In a conversation today between the US ambassador to Israel and Deputy Prime Minister Allon, Allon emphasized that Tel Aviv had not and would not take the initiative to violate the cease-fire. He claimed Israel's adherence to the cease-fire had prevented the complete destruction of the entire Egyptian Army by the Israelis, something he acknowledged would probably have been the wrong thing to do if there were to be any hope for peace through negotiations. Thus, he added, it was probably a good thing also for Egyptian pride and honor that Cairo could still claim some semblance of victory in having crossed the Suez Canal and, at least in some places, remained there.

16. Allon claimed that the cease-fire was completely effective on the Syrian front. He went on to stress, however, that there remained the problem of fedayeen attacks from Lebanon on Israeli settlements. He said that Tel Aviv was coming under increasing domestic pressure to put a stop to these attacks and might be forced to act if the Lebanese did not.

17. The Israeli Knesset, meanwhile, adopted a resolution early on the morning of 24 October supporting the government's acceptance of the Security Council call for a cease-fire. Only the right-wing Likud bloc opposed the resolution, attacking the acceptance as an invitation for further aggression by allowing

the war to end in a stalemate rather than in a decisive Israeli victory. Prime Minister Meir's rebuttal challenged the opposition to come up with an alternative plan.

18. The US Embassy in Tel Aviv comments that the Israeli public generally supports the government's acceptance of the cease-fire, but that the debate marks the opening shot by the opposition preceding the next Knesset elections, and foreshadows an election campaign focusing on security and foreign policy issues arising from the war. According to an Israeli broadcast, the Knesset earlier today also approved the draft bill to postpone the elections until 11 December.

ROMANIA

19. Romania today advanced its own plan for implementing the cease-fire. In a declaration given to all chiefs of mission in Bucharest, Romania proposed that Israel withdraw five kilometers from the positions it held on 22 October. An international peacekeeping team would enforce the separation of the opposing sides, while a new conference on the Middle East under UN auspices sought a settlement.

20. The proposal is in line with an authoritative editorial published today in the party paper Sioneti, indicating that Bucharest will seek its own active role in Middle East peace efforts. The US Embassy in Bucharest has commented that this effort is in line with Romania's policy of downgrading the role of the superpowers and championing that of smaller nations.

FEDAYEEN

21. [redacted] a meeting of Palestinian organizations [redacted] in Beirut ended in the walkout of "certain elements" who denounced the moderate tone of the meeting and said they would take "immediate action." [redacted] characterized the dissenters as completely uncontrolled and strongly

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anti-US. He assumes they intend to act soon against US interests. [REDACTED]

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WEST GERMANY

22. The West German Government today followed up its earlier approaches with a [REDACTED] request that the US cease resupplying Israel with military goods from the Federal Republic. State Secretary Frank told a senior US Embassy official that Bonn also had ordered the Israeli ship now taking on US military material in Bremerhaven to complete its loading quickly, and said that other scheduled Israeli ships will not be permitted to load. Frank reiterated the West German position that the advent of the cease-fire obviates the need for emergency resupply efforts. A West German Foreign Ministry spokesman later publicly confirmed that the meeting with the US official had taken place. He gave no details but--undoubtedly for the benefit of Arab ears--underscored that Bonn has maintained a "neutral position" in the Middle East conflict.

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USSR - JEWISH EMIGRATION

23. The flow of Jewish emigrants from the Soviet Union continues at a high level. [REDACTED]

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24. Meanwhile, a Jewish agency contact of the US Embassy in Tel Aviv said that Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union has continued at roughly the same level as before the war, averaging approximately 150 per day. He also said that Israel had imposed complete censorship since the start of the war on all reports of activities relating to Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union in order to avoid publicity that might cause Moscow to halt the flow of emigrants.

SAUDI ARABIA - ITALY

25. According to a US Embassy report, an Italian Foreign Ministry official indicated that Saudi Arabia has threatened to impose oil sanctions on Italy in retaliation for Rome's allowing Israeli charter flights, apparently carrying war materials, to land in Italy.

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